

from the current average of five hours per day, to over fourteen hours per day by 2020, forcing hundreds of thousands of Maryland residents to endure long hours of delay each day, diverting many vehicle trips onto already overwhelmed secondary and arterial roads and inducing increased "cut-through" traffic in neighborhoods, severely impacting the safety and quality of life of pedestrians and motorists, limiting accessibility of jobs and affordable housing, and threatening the future of the local economy; and

WHEREAS, Severe traffic congestion is preventing residents, students, and businesses throughout the Baltimore-Washington area from taking full advantage of the many educational, cultural, employment, retail, professional service, and business opportunities for those in the Baltimore area who are being denied timely access to such opportunities in Montgomery and Prince George's counties, and vice-versa, and this reduced accessibility impacts all sectors of the regional economy, including BWI Airport, the Port of Baltimore, the University System of Maryland, and other key regional and statewide facilities; and

WHEREAS, The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments has identified a growing transportation "crisis" in the region, despite years of sustained effort and investment by State and local governments to reduce vehicle demand through improved transit service, carpooling incentives, concentration of development around transit stations, employment policies favorable to flex-time schedules and teleworking, and other demand-reduction measures; and

WHEREAS, The Intercounty Connector (ICC) and other road and transit improvements throughout the region would serve to better connect the region and the many venues being proposed in the Baltimore-Washington region's Olympics bid for 2012; and

WHEREAS, The ICC has been on both Montgomery and Prince George's counties' Master Plans for over 30 years; and

WHEREAS, The Master Plan Alignment of the ICC is consistent with Maryland's Smart Growth laws because it links major job and population centers within existing priority funding areas, and all of its exits serve existing priority funding areas; and

WHEREAS, Montgomery County's and Prince George's County's original "wedges and corridors" General Plans, developed in the 1960's, identify the ICC as a critical east-west connection to support planned growth within the I-270 and I-95 corridors; and

WHEREAS, The Metropolitan Washington Council of Government's current Vision Plan for the Washington Region calls for improved circumferential links between the region's major corridors as one of the region's top transportation objectives; and

WHEREAS, The last Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) on the ICC was abandoned in 1997 before reaching any final conclusions on alternatives, and without completing the required steps identified in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA); and